

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action mailed on November 8, 2004.

No claims are amended, cancelled, or added; as a result, claims 1-58 remain pending in this application.

§103 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1-58 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ekstedt et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,206,582) in view of Tong (U.S. Patent No. 4,896,269).

Ekstedt describes a control system for automated parametric test equipment, including the ability to define and execute test sequences on such equipment. Ekstedt further teaches, as in the cited Figure 9's element 76, sequential control of both semiconductor test equipment such as a wafer loader, and parametric test equipment such as a prober.

The Office Action of November 8, 2004 states, however, that Ekstedt fails to teach concurrent control of operation of both semiconductor test equipment and parametric test equipment (*see*, p. 2, ln. 17-20). In contrast, the present invention claims a semiconductor parametric test system in which concurrent control of both parametric test equipment and semiconductor test equipment is performed.

The Office Action relies on Tong to show concurrency of the parametric test control and semiconductor test equipment control, but Tong teaches only prioritization of scheduling conflicting jobs, and fails to address concurrency but simply addresses prioritization of jobs or tasks that are not concurrent but are performed serially. The Office Action's argument that prioritization of jobs to be performed serially or sequentially is the same as concurrent control or operation of jobs is inconsistent with the plain English meaning of the word "concurrent".

Webster's Third New World Dictionary, Unabridged, defines "concurrent" as "occurring, arising, or operating at the same time". Because Tong has not been shown to teach jobs or tasks as occurring, arising, or operating at the same time, the prioritized serial tasks of Tong cannot be said to be concurrent.

Further, benefit not present in Ekstedt or Tong is realized by concurrent control of multiple hardware elements, providing a synergistic effect as described in the specification.

Attention is drawn specifically to the prior art example and to page 5 of the specification, which is drafted to clearly explain how concurrent control applied to certain example embodiment of the present invention differs from prior art such as the serially scheduled systems of Ekstedt or Tong.

Because neither cited reference teaches concurrent control of parametric test instrumentation and semiconductor test equipment as is recited in the pending claims and further defined in the specification of the pending application, the pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reexamination and allowance of pending claims 1-58 is therefore respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney (612) 349-9581 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

Jan 10 05

By

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 10 day of January, 2005.

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